



Bubble Theatre  
frees people's creative  
voices to foster a more  
connected and equal  
society

Registered No: 1058397  
Charity Reg No: 264 359



Bubble has been making theatre with and for our communities since 1972.

## WE CARE ABOUT

### CREATIVITY

We believe that everyone is naturally creative. Through theatre we encourage people to examine the world around them, fulfil their creative potential and have fun.

### CONNECTION

Bubble's theatre stretches thinking and flexes emotional muscles. The result is a feeling of belonging and togetherness. We make theatre with our shared variety of life experiences at the helm.

### COMMUNITY

We are a platform for listening and being heard, a mechanism which enables all stories to be recognised, amplified and shared with a wider audience.

*"I think I have helped create a very moving story which comes from my heart and my life experience that a lot of other people can connect to."*

Young Theatre Maker

*"Apart from the creative work, the telephone calls provide very valuable human connection and opportunities to tailor work to suit each participant."*

*I've said it before, and I'll say it again... It is a real privilege to do this work."*

Eric - Artist Connector - Creative Elders

*"The most memorable thing has been seeing my son, who was quiet in most social situations, find a space where he could be himself and more."*

Parent - 6-8yrs drama group



# Our vision for 2021- 22

The pandemic has given us an unprecedented opportunity to reflect, re-focus and evolve. It coincided with a planned organisational re-design and we re-emerge with a joint female leadership team and renewed purpose - to build a more connected and equal society.



Theatre is our tool to free the creative voices people of all ages who feel unheard and unrepresented. The Covid-19 pandemic has seen cultural, social and economic divides increase. This has been matched by our determination to promote equality in our work. As the impact of the pandemic becomes understood, we want to be here to support our communities to re-build and reconnect. In the coming year we will focus on our strengthening our programmes for 3 groups of people who have been disproportionately affected by the pandemic:

- *Primary school aged children, particularly those in need of support for social @ emotional delays*
- *Teenagers and young adults who are outside of work and education*
- *Older adults, particularly those living alone and in sheltered accommodation*

Our priorities are to:

- Build organisational resilience and financial stability
- Continue to provide opportunities for high quality creative connection and expression for children, young adults and older adults who have been negatively impacted by the pandemic
- Continue to employ our current salaried and freelance staff team
- Implement the recommendations from our organisational re-design process
- Increase wellbeing support for staff
- Increase capacity for our existing cultural activities where we have identified demand or gaps in local provision





# Children's Programme

5 - 11 yrs

This year we are bringing together our work with children of Primary school age to form a new, cohesive programme.

96% of primary school teachers recently surveyed by the Education Endowment Foundation said they were concerned about pupils' speech-and-language development following lockdown. Using established story-drama techniques, we allow children to tell their stories and be heard.

In consultation with local partners such as schools and statutory services, we explore theatre's role in supporting their work to create a more equal and connected society.

- Creative consultation with children:  
Our freelance artists from across our previous and current projects will be coming together to share what we have learnt from working with the children in our community. This will lead to a creative consultation with children, asking what London Bubble can do to support their creative voices.

- Speech Bubbles  
A national primary school drama intervention supporting children's communication skills, confidence and wellbeing. Co-delivered by freelance theatre professional and Teaching Assistants, year 1 & 2 children are referred by their school to take part in weekly, small group story-drama sessions.

- Playing safe:  
A drama intervention for year 6 students at risk of serious youth violence.



We are excited to announce that Speech Bubbles has recently established itself as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation. We are working together to support Speech Bubbles CIO in taking over the running of the national programme. London Bubble will continue to deliver Speech Bubbles as the originating partner, in schools in Southwark and Lewisham.



*“ I loved it because we could explain our ideas and make up our own stories and express ourselves. ”*

*Jerome, former Speech Bubbles participant*



# Young People's Programme

## 12- 30 yrs

We believe that every young person has a voice that deserves to be heard. The process of making theatre offers opportunities for young people to engage their creativity and explore the topics that matter to them.

At Bubble we practice unconditional positive regard for young people and use forum theatre techniques to change the narrative so often attributed to this age group. We provide alternative entry points into the creative industries, diversifying the sector and the voices heard through it.

- Young Theatre Makers (YTM):  
A forum theatre project for 18-25s including performance and leadership opportunities. Many YTM Associates go on to be employed as facilitators and actors on commissioned projects and other Bubble programmes.
- Creating Justice:  
In partnership with Southwark Youth Offending Service, creative engagement for young people in the Criminal Justice System
- Projects with Looked After Children and those at risk of school exclusion
- Bespoke performances at conferences and events including partnerships with Norton Rose Fulbright and Redthread.

**“ I can now say I have been part of an extraordinary play that I helped to devise and brought it to life, and I am more than proud of that.**

**I have made friends for life and know that I have Bubble. It's nice to have a sort of theatre family to fall back on. ”**

Bubble Young Theatre Maker

Young Theatre Makers report:

- feeling **more optimistic** about the future after the project.
- **improved connections to industry professionals.**
- feeling **closer to other people** than they had at the start.



**“ It placed young people in a creative relationship with place and story. It was a celebration of community. ”**





# Older Adult's Programme 55 yrs+

Some of our closest neighbours to Bubble's Rotherhithe base live in sheltered accommodation but it was many years until we got to know them. Recognising our responsibility to challenge how easily older adults become hidden within society, we developed our Creative Elders Programme to allow their creative voices and skills to become visible and celebrated.

- **Tea Break Theatre**  
The only theatre based activity available to residents of sheltered housing in Southwark. Unlike care homes, sheltered accommodation does not include activities. Our weekly theatre groups animate communal lounges and community spaces at Bubble HQ and Age UK where our artist-connectors co-create with residents. Also known as Creative Homes.
- **The Rotherhithe Shed**  
Run in partnership with our neighbours Time & Talents and inspired by the Men's Shed movement. The doors of Bubble's workshop are open twice weekly for local older adults to make, mend, tinker and socialise.

Our approach celebrates everyday creativity, often using common household objects and everyday experiences as a starting point for conversation and creative exploration. Participants tell us that Creative Elders supports increased social connections, building communities, supporting maintained independence, good health and wellbeing for older adults in our local area.

“ It also gives us a spirit of creativity. [...] In making, in acting, in different ways. It sort of expands your knowledge. [...] you look forward to coming here, mixing up, eating together, laughing. At least it releases you from loneliness in your room. It gives us a lot of confidence – [...] and then you feel you've achieved something. ”  
Sheltered housing resident



“ ...that led to me getting to know my neighbours - which was really really important. Without that I think, to this day, we would have just possibly smiled, and nodded and that would be it. It's quite a journey to get to the stage of being friends with people. I think Bubble has been really critical for the group vehicle that has helped with that process. ”  
Sheltered housing resident

